



SPEECH BY DR. ABDULKARIM SEID, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LAUNCH OF THE YEAR OF THE NILE BASIN

JANUARY 27, 2019

BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

**Hon. Dr. Deo-Guide Rurema, Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock of Burundi,
and Chairman of the Nile Council of Ministers**

Ministers in the Burundi Government present

Madam Renilde Ndayishimiye, Chairperson of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Government officials,

Representatives of NBI Development Partners

Staff of NBI present,

The media fraternity,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am honored to be in Burundi today, at the official launch of **The Year of the Nile Basin**.

It is to be recalled that in August 2018 the Nile Council of Ministers under the chairmanship of Hon. Dr. Deo-Guide Rurema Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock for Burundi, agreed to declare 2019 as The Year of the Nile Basin. This is in commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the Nile Basin Initiative on February 22, 1999 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Honorable Ministers, Dignitaries, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I dare claim that the NBI is the first-ever and only inclusive transboundary organization that has brought pretty all riparian states of the Nile together. Over the last two decades, NBI, despite considerable challenges, has succeeded to undertake what one might rightfully call multifaceted foundational work – such as joint investment preparation; capacity development; conducting

strategic water resources analyses; formulation of various policy suites, etc. - to lay the basis for sustainable, institutionalized basin-wide cooperation. This means, to extend the metaphor, erecting a fully functional house on that foundation remains to be completed. This will constitute NBI member countries' task for the coming decades and for the foreseeable future!

Under the motto: '**Putting Water at the Heart of Regional Transformation**', 2019 is dedicated to highlight the importance of Nile waters in achieving the basin wide development agenda. Nile waters play critical role in achieving not only water security but also food and energy security,. Indeed the shared nature of the Nile's water resources must be a key driver towards regional integration.

At the same time, the Nile Basin is facing a multitude of shared challenges which, like the Nile itself, span across national borders. These include increasing water variability, ever-growing water demand and multiple impacts of climate change. In order to adequately respond to these challenges, countries must act together.

The Nile Basin Initiative is the only basin wide platform mandated to provide a platform for NBI member states to dialogue on the joint management and development of the shared Nile Basin water resources.

We are currently implementing a 10-year strategy, which was approved by the Nile Council of Ministers in 2017. Among the six strategic priorities identified in the Strategy, the first priority is to enhance availability and sustainable utilisation and management of transboundary water resources of the Nile Basin.

Implementation of the 10-year strategy no doubt contributes to the motto of 'Putting Water at the heart of Regional Transformation.

Hon. Minister, Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by thanking the organizers of this event for their dedication and hard work and all of you participants for sparing time to attend this key NBI milestone event.

I wish us all enjoyable launch ceremony.